

The Hon. Rebecca Beach Smith
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
Walter E. Hoffman Courthouse
600 Granby Street
Norfolk, Virginia 23510

CC: RMS Titanic Inc.
3045 Kingston Ct.
Peachtree Corners, GA 30071

Dear Honorable Rebecca Beach Smith,

My mentor Dr. Pellegrino, whose bestselling *Titanic* book inspired the famous 1997 movie, and who sailed with the original founder of RMS Titanic Inc. (RMSTI) George Tulloch, told me that archaeology is about more than speaking for the dead. We as scientists must keep faith with the dead as well. That we are obligated to an objective pursuit of truth when preserving the legacy of human history, by always consulting primary sources.

RMSTI of Experiential Media Group (EMG) LLC was granted salvor-in-possession status regarding RMS *Titanic*'s artifacts, under the condition that they are used to facilitate education. I am a researcher and peer-reviewed published scientist. One of my research projects requires information within one artifact recovered by RMSTI - a small diary belonging to Howard Irwin, whose written entries were transcribed. A descendant family member, Mrs. Barbara Shuttle, has granted me permission to view and learn from the artifact's transcription.

After pleading with RMSTI for over two years (since July 2021), they have strung me along with excuses by claiming to reconsider my request, and now outright denied me access to both the artifact and its transcription. If RMSTI is not willing to assist researchers, while claiming to promote education in order to justify additional salvage, then what exactly is their intention for these artifacts? They continue to profit from exhibiting them; an endeavor my research will not adversely impact (on the contrary, it may enhance interest). I only requested information from this artifact for my research, something they have concealed for 30 years. Under these exclusive practices by RMSTI, the diary's historical information is rendered just as inaccessible to researchers as it was on the ocean floor. They are a multi-million-dollar company that a sole researcher could never hope to challenge. Ironically, displaying the artifact itself has granted them the financial means to continue barring researchers from learning about its story. Based on the court's covenants below, their attempts to monopolize this information, and stifle access to education, is a violation as well.

R.M.S. Titanic, Inc. v. The Wrecked & Abandoned Vessel, No. 2:93cv902, at 6 n. 12 (E.D.Va. Apr. 15, 2008).

At minimum, these proposed covenants must ensure that the artifacts are conserved and curated in an intact collection that is available to the public and accessible for historical research, educational purposes, and scientific research, in perpetuity.

I am appealing for your assistance and consideration in this matter, which I would deeply appreciate. I am genuinely passionate about my work and have dreamed of the opportunity to learn from this archaeological item. Yet my passion alone is insufficient to penetrate the corporate barriers set before me. Thank you.

Regards,
Anthony El-Khoury, MD

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